

## **San Jacinto Waste Pits** **Short-Term Communications Plan**

*For execution on or after March \_\_, 2010, under the auspices of EPA Region 6*

### **Current Situation:**

A set of time-critical actions to restrict public access on the east and west sides of the San Jacinto River in the vicinity of the Site, install an erosion mat on the northwest shoreline of the Site, and address the potential for a release from the east side of the Site are planned for the late Winter and Spring of 2010 in connection with the San Jacinto Waste Pits Superfund Site.

This location has reportedly been used for recreational and subsistence fishing or other shoreline activities. Site preparation and delivery and placement of components involved in executing this project will directly affect and eliminate public access to the Site and shoreline as well as significantly alter downward the public's interaction with the adjacent waterway.

Heightened awareness generated by well-coordinated explanatory communications is needed to ensure that remedial activity undertaken at the Site 1) is clearly marked for those who encounter the project's barriers; 2) enhances safety and limits risk; and 3) is comprehended and understood by individuals who previously accessed the Site or who live or work in proximity to the property.

Commencement of the project in the Early Spring presents a proactive opportunity to generate new and specific public awareness about the Site in a mode and scope not previously possible when the Site was dormant. The San Jacinto Waste Pits Superfund Site Community Awareness Committee, under the auspices of EPA Region 6, has determined the time-critical removal action plan needs to be actively supported with coordinated communications designed to mesh with the project's start.

Additional follow-up communications actions and tactics will be developed post rollout of this short-term plan under the EPA Community Plan process. Determination of remaining impacted audiences can be assessed after access barriers are in place, which will by definition terminate public uses of the immediate Site area and may cause these people to use other locations. Once the remaining target audience for the Site area can be measured and defined, social communications can be developed if needed to assure the audience penetration and reach of the message is achieved at acceptable/optimal levels.

The following outlines a plan for generating localized community awareness of the project, its intent and related risks in a manner that will reach and benefit relevant constituents/audiences in the short term.

**Communications Objectives:**

- Increase awareness of the Site and reasons for the new activity among: the public, county constituents, engaged community organizations and their members and stakeholders, and citizens in the area with an interest in or who have interacted with the Site and surrounding areas in the recent past
- Deliver consistent and timely messages and supporting content that explains and reinforces the time-critical actions being taken and, where appropriate, the related risks stemming from fish and crab consumption
- To the extent possible, build long-term comprehension of advisories among affected target audiences, based on accurate information about the plan's intent and risks related to the Site's dioxin-related contamination. Ideally, this should serve to materially lower the number of target audiences needed to be reached to heed advisory warnings in the future or in connection with advisories unrelated to the Site (e.g., PCBs or pesticides).

**Strategy:**

Develop and deliver effective communications tactics that:

- Strive to reasonably reach target audiences who come in contact with the Site or plan to return to the Site based on previous experiences there
- Leverage and enlist public sector and interested organizations in helping to deliver cogent messages to relevant audiences
- Utilize the media where appropriate to amplify awareness and heighten public knowledge of the Site and associated risks

**Audience and Messaging Needs:**

- ☐ Determination of multi-lingual and multi-cultural communication requirements
- ☐ Simple, non-technical explanation of the Site access closure along with a consumption advisory/warning

**Tools & Tactics***Site Signage*

- ☐ Durable, weather-proof and compelling graphical media that explains the Site's closure and warns of trespassing or restricted access. Use the EPA imprimatur to reinforce this message.
- ☐ Determination of appropriate locations along project perimeter to assure awareness and prevent trespass

*Flyers / Handbills*

- ☐ Simple messaging that replicates warnings contained on Site signage
- ☐ Distribute via local channels [area industrial locations, businesses, neighborhood centers, homeowners associations, schools, marinas, etc.] in advance of final access restrictions
- ☐ Develop target list for optimal distribution. Consider distribution directly at Site, pre-closure during peak weekend/usage periods.

*Project Start Announcement [multiple options, depending on EPA and Committee preferences]*

- News release distribution to appropriate local outlets (all languages)
- Media briefing at designated public conference center or public health center (ensure multi-lingual media attendance)
- Sign unveiling and/or placement [photo opportunity] at Site in connection with completion of final fencing components

*Special Interest Groups and Other Channels*

- Briefings or placement of regular meeting agendas as a means of providing information to key identified organizations
- Web Site message material for use/posting by public agencies, relevant organizations and on recreation-oriented Sites
- PSAs, if appropriate

*Communications Materials to be Developed*

- Key messages/talking points for use by all Awareness Committee-related members and agencies
- Media advisory
- News release
- Backgrounder/fact sheet + Site map
- Frequently asked questions set

### **Immediate Needs in Connection with Short-term Awareness Campaign:**

- ☐ Development of appropriate copy for signs and flyers
  - Languages and graphical components need to be determined
  - Pre-production of signage; publication of handbills
- ☐ Preparation of related communications materials listed above
- ☐ Determination of timing/schedule for public message distribution and/or briefings to begin
- ☐ Contingency for messaging if Site activity prompts news media inquiries or earlier coverage than scheduled

### **Post-Campaign Evaluation**

Analysis of the impact and results of this short-term communications effort will follow its execution. Additional communications strategies, actions and tactics can be developed and integrated into the project's Community Plan under EPA's process for this longer-term deliverable.

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